

- ☑ Vets support us (back)
- ☑ Sutton cited for leadership (back)
- ☑ The 1908 bid specs for the first Army airplane asked for a design that could be taken apart and packed in Army wagons.

Security Forces log record time in AOR

by MSgt. Tom Allocco

The record in the Patriot Wing for the most time deployed since 9/11 may be held by a group of 439th Security Forces Squadron members who recently returned from an Iraqi Freedom AOR Naval air base.

Maj. Mary Ann Lutz, 439th SFS commander, recently returned with a team of 10 other security specialists from the base where they had served since November. Eight of the 10 had previously served in the AOR from February to June, 2002 for a total of 280 days deployed in support of the war on terrorism.

Since 9/11 about half of the approximately 130 squadron members have served tours overseas or a Central Command headquarters at MacDill AFB, Fla. Twelve security specialists recently returned from two months in Baghdad.

Among those of Lutz's team who served both tours overseas was CMSgt. Frank Puopolo, chief of security forces, who earlier served at an Enduring Freedom base in support of operations in Afghanistan and the Horn of Africa.

Puopolo described the air base at which the team served the past six months as more comfortable than others in the AOR, but still an expeditionary air base without luxuries.

They lived in tents and for security reasons were confined to the air base for the entire six months, except for duty assignments. It helped that the MWR program set up a gym and recreation center and there were four first class hot meals a day.

To fight boredom and burn off energy, volleyball nets were set up in the sand and many of the security forces became volleyball fanatics during the long months.

Lutz served as commander of the base's defense force and Puopolo as security forces enlisted manager. Others were: 1st Lt. Shawn Swarz, operations officer; SMSgt. Michael Thorpe, first sergeant; MSgt. Stephen Valley, resources

AT THE CAR HOP -- Army Reservists of the 226th Transportation Railway Operating Company train with a 40-ton crane by lifting a Humvee in Dogpatch on Wednesday. The crane, which is the only one of its kind in New England, is designed to lift railroad cars. Each strap can hold more than 11 tons. The soldiers regularly train on Westover's more than five miles of train track.

--Photo by
MSgt. W.C. Pope



NCOIC; MSgt. Randy Bates, ground intelligence NCOIC; TSgt. Paul Cyr, operations NCO; TSgt. Michael Bellarose, ground intelligence NCO; TSgt. Richard Schmoke, resources NCO; SSgt. Wayne Baptiste, orderly room administrator; and SSgt. Bruce Lawler, radio operator.

The airbase provided C-130 and tanker support for the AOR. It was set up as a Navy air field and many of the host nation's officers had undergone British military training.

The security members initially went to the base on a 90-day AEF tour, which was extended indefinitely during the Iraqi Freedom build-up. The toughest part of the tour was when the war started and telephone and e-mail privileges were suspended, cutting everyone off from their families. Another difficult part of the six months was not knowing how long the tour would last, especially near the end when it looked like they might be staying several months longer. The orders home

came as a pleasant surprise.

On the positive side, it was an opportunity to do an important "real world" job. "You train to deploy. Just being on a deployment is an opportunity to use all those skills you are trained to use," Puopolo said.

The slogan which brings people together in the AOR is "One Team, One Fight." They were the only reservists in the security unit but, "when we got there it was an invisible line. I guess that's what they mean by a seamless force," Lutz said. The Patriot Wing members contributed extensive military and civilian experience which helped season the active duty force, she said.

"I couldn't have asked for any better performance from any of the individual guys. That made my job a ton easier," Lutz said.

The Patriot Wing security forces earned points with the others when a pallet

(continued on next page)

439th AW MISSION: Actively support national objectives on a global scale with ready, mobility forces

SFS ... (From page 1)

arrived from the Westover Family Support Center loaded with toiletries, games, books and other gifts donated by the community. "It was like Christmas. We shared it with the entire camp. Just the idea of getting that kind of support was a great boost for morale," Lutz said.

During the tour Lutz, Puopolo and others deployed to Bagram AB, Afghanistan on duty. Cyr was tasked to provide aircraft security on a mission that took him to an Iraqi airfield. On board the aircraft were injured Iraqi civilians returning home after receiving hospital care outside the country.

The experience, he said, "put faces with the Iraqi citizens." He saw the real price of Iraqi Freedom. What appeared to be a family mutually supporting each other was in fact a man who had lost his wife. He was with his son and with a woman who had lost her entire family except for one daughter. The young girl had lost her right eye and the woman had lost her own right eye. Cyr saw other children on stretchers and life support systems, among them one badly burned and another shot in the hip.

At the Iraqi air base he saw craters, bullet holes and burnt facilities which testified to the intensity of the battle to free the Iraqi people.

Pat Stats

Served since Feb. 2, 2003

7,372 passengers -- 2,482 aircraft
27,839,762 pounds of cargo
Info from MSgt. Jim Garrity, 42APS

14,870 hot meals served
Box lunches: 5,020
Info from MSgt. David Beauregard, 439SVS

Fuel since Feb. 1
16,690,468 gallons of JP-8
Info from Jim Maloney, Fuels

PATRIOT express

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Security guidelines prohibit using deploying reservist's last names)

Contact us:
DSN: 589-2020 - (413) 557-2020
www.afrc.af.mil/439aw
439patriot.editor@westover.af.mil

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Vets support us

by Amn. Michael Lanza

The veterans of two Chicopee American Legion posts are showing their support for the troops by working with Westover's Family Support Center to help the Patriot Wing and other area military families.

In their most recent effort, members of American Legion Post 438, New Ludlow Rd., donated 100 teddy bears to children at a Family Support Center's pajama party.

"Programs like the teddy bear campaign help children cope with the absence of their parents," said TSgt. Kimberly Babin of the support center. "It has tremendously helped with family morale," she said.

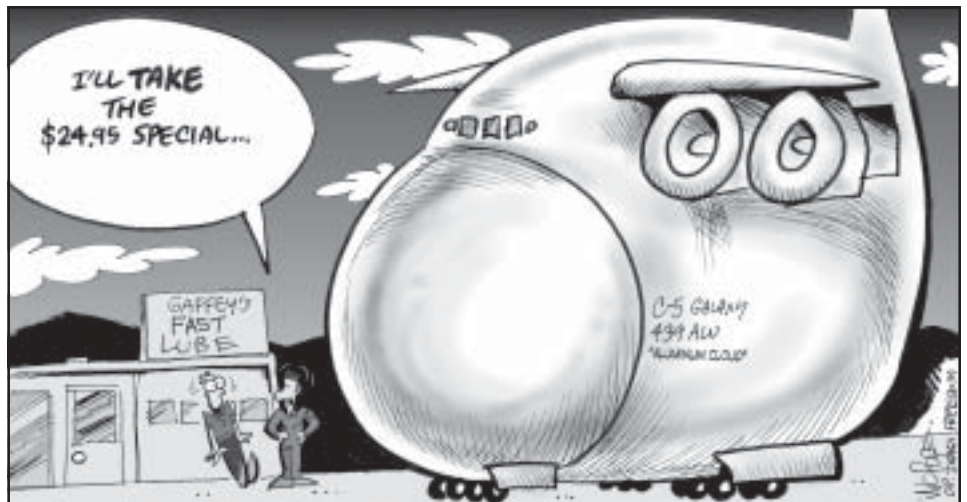
American Legion Post 438 and Post 275 of Robbins Road have developed a close relationship with the Westover Family Support Center and the Pioneer Valley USO during the past two years in which troops have been called on to serve in the war on terrorism, Babin said.

Post 438 spearheaded a program called Operation Pillowcase when Westover members were deployed in 2002. The program used iron-on transfers to create pillowcases which displayed photos of deployed parents for their children.

The American Legion's Massachusetts 9/11 program raised \$103,000 during Operation Enduring Freedom, \$16,000 of which was donated to Westover members through American Legion Post 275. The grants were given to Westover reservists who were experiencing financial difficulties due to activation. They helped families pay rent, medical and auto insurance, utilities and child related expenses. The local American Legion posts also sponsor an American Legion Family Support Network to help military families.

"The veterans' support is just another example of a growing bond between Westover and community groups, helping to accomplish difficult missions while ensuring the wellbeing of Patriot Wing families. Without such support from our friends, our job would be vastly more difficult" Babin said.

Express-ions



Sutton cited for leadership

by MSgt. Tom Allocco

SrA. Timothy Sutton, wing chaplain assistant, was recognized with the Leadership Award of his Airman Leadership Class at Hanscom AFB during a graduation banquet in June. Brig. Gen. Martin M. Mazick, wing commander, and CMSgt. Jeffrey Sherwin, command chief master sergeant, attended the banquet honoring the graduates of the six-week leadership course.

Sutton earned the Leadership Award as the student who made the most significant contribution to the overall success of the class. Selection was based on peer evaluation and interviews. The Leadership Award is sponsored by the Hanscom AFB First Sergeants Association.

The plaque bears the likeness of A1C William Pitsenbarger, a pararescueman who posthumously earned the Medal of Honor in Vietnam in 1966 for action involving saving soldiers' lives while under fire.

Swimming pool opens

The Recreation Services swimming pool is open for recreational swimming and for swimming lessons.

Pool hours are currently 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Hours will be extended to 7 p.m. when additional lifeguards become available.

Swim lessons will be offered from June 23 to July 2 at the four levels of 5 and under, beginners, intermediate and advance. For those age 6 and above lessons will be from 9 to 10:30 a.m. on Mondays and Wednesdays. For children 5 and under lessons will be 10:30 to 11 a.m. Lap swimming for adults will be available at the same time.

A session of swim lessons will be offered from July 14 to 23 at the same times.

Children 5 and under must have a parent with them in the water.

If there is a high demand, lessons will also be offered in August. For more information, call the Fitness Center at Ext. 3958.